

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 05547 01 OF 02 301232Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6540
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCUSAFE
CINCUSAREUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 5547

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

FROM AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, GR, US
SUBJECT: DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN'S COMMENTS CREATE FUROR IN
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 05547 01 OF 02 301232Z

GREECE

REF: ATHENS 5522

1. SECRETARY BROWN'S REPLIES TO SENATOR HART'S QUESTIONS
REGARDING THE US DEFENSE POSTURE IN GREECE SHOULD THE
LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO RESULT IN THE OVERTHROW OF THE

GOVERNMENT HAD CREATED A GROWING FUROR IN THE GREEK MEDIA. AS PORTRAYED HERE YESTERDAY (REFTEL) AND TODAY, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE US HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS TO INTERVENE IN GREEK INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

2. I HAVE REVIEWED AN INFORMAL TRANSCRIPT OF THIS EXCHANGE, AND IT IS QUITE EVIDENT THAT THE GREEK MEDIA HAS MISCONSTRUED IT. HOWEVER, BOTH THE MEDIA AND THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION HERE ARE NOW LAUNCHED ON A CAMPAIGN TO GIVE IT THE WORST POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION. WHILE I DO NOT THINK RELEASING THE TRANSCRIPT AT THIS POINT WOULD BE USEFUL, IN ORDER TO HELP DEFUSE THIS CAMPAIGN I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

"I WANT TO DISPEL THE CONFUSION THAT HAS ARISEN FROM PRESS REPORTS IN GREECE ON A BRIEF, EX-TEMPORANEOUS EXCHANGE DURING TESTIMONY ON THE TURKISH ARMS EMBARGO BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE JULY 28.

"I REAFFIRM THIS GOVERNMENT'S FAITH IN AND RESPECT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREECE ARE COMMITTED. GREECE TODAY ENJOYS A VIGOROUS AND HEALTHY DEMOCRACY.

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 05547 01 OF 02 301232Z

"THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS AND THE WISDOM OF THE GREEK PEOPLE TO GOVERN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS IN COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE."

3. THE MATTER HAS REACHED SUCH PROPORTIONS THAT PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS AND OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON IT. KARAMANLIS RESPONDED BRIEFLY TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS ON THE ISSUE LATE YESTERDAY IN THESSALONIKI AS FOLLOWS: "I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS STATEMENT HAS THE MEANING OF US INTERFERENCE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN ANY EVENT, THE QUESTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE IS A MATTER FOR THE GREEK PEOPLE, AND ON THIS NO FOREIGNER CAN HAVE AN OPINION."

4. PREDICTABLY, THE OPPOSITION WAS MUCH MORE STRIDENT. PASOK'S PAPANDREOU HOTLY ATTACKED SECRETARY BROWN'S STATEMENT, SAYING THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL HAS CYNICALLY ADMITTED THAT THE PENTAGON HAS A STRATEGY FOR THE INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF GREECE. HE ADDED THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE FINALLY ADMITTED THAT THE USG TREATS GREECE LIKE A SATELLITE, AND

CALLED ON THE GOG TO SEEK EXPLANATIONS FOR THE PROVOCATIVE POSITION OF SECRETARY BROWN. PAPANDREOU WENT ON TO STRESS THE NEED FOR "UNCONDITIONAL NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE" AND UNDERLINED THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE WOULD NOT BECOME MASTERS OF THEIR OWN FUTURE UNLESS GREECE TOTALLY DIS-ENGAGED ITSELF POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY FROM NATO AND UNLESS THE FOREIGN BASES IN GREECE WERE CLOSED. THE LEADER OF THE UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER, JOHN ZIGDIS, AND COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR SECRETARY DRAKOPOULOS ALSO WERE VOCIFEROUS IN CONDEMNING SECRETARY BROWN'S ALLEGED STATEMENTS AS THREATS TO THE STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF DEMOCRACY IN GREECE.

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 05547 02 OF 02 301236Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 5547

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

FROM AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY

5. SAMPLE HEADLINES: LEFTIST PROINI ELEFHEROTYPIA:
"AMERICANS, LEAVE US ALONE -- THE BROWN STATEMENT
INTERFERENCE IN OUR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS;" LIBERAL
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 05547 02 OF 02 301236Z

TO VIMA: "FOLLOWING TO VIMA'S REVELATION YESTERDAY --
STORM BECAUSE OF THE BROWN STATEMENT ABOUT THE 'PLANS'
-- KARAMANLIS: GREECE'S GOVERNMENT IS A MATTER FOR
THE GREEK PEOPLE -- PAPANDREOU: AMERICA TREATS GREECE
LIKE A SATELLITE;" PRO-GOVERNMENT ACROPOLIS: "KARAMANLIS
REPLIES TO THE U.S. DEFENSE MINISTER'S STATEMENTS THAT
'THE PENTAGON HAS PLANS FOR EVERY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
IN GREECE' -- THE GREEKS ELECT THEIR GOVERNMENT AND
NOT THE AMERICANS;" GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTING
KATHIMERINI: "KARAMANLIS'S IMMEDIATE AND DYNAMIC
REACTION TO THE BROWN STATEMENT -- 'THE MATTER OF
GREECE'S GOVERNMENT IS A MATTER FOR THE GREEK PEOPLE
AND NO FOREIGNER HAS AN OPINION';" COMMUNIST (KKE-
EXTERIOR) RIZOSPASTIS: "THE CYNICAL STATEMENTS OF THE
AMERICAN DEFENSE SECRETARY -- A GROSS PROVOCATION
AGAINST OUR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE -- THE GOVERNMENT'S
ATTEMPT TO COVER UP WASHINGTON'S INTERVENTION IS
CONTRARY TO THE WISH OF THE PEOPLE -- THE RELEASE OF
THE NATION FROM AMERICAN-NATO SUZERAINITY IS A VITAL NATIONAL
NECESSITY."
MCCLOSKEY

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